**Lesson Plan 4: Songs Are Primary Sources**

Because songwriters are expressing personal or collective point-of-view, songs can be very useful as small windows into other cultures and times. What was the author’s purpose? What was the main idea of the song? Who was his audience? Do we understand it the same way now that we’re the audience? How does the point-of-view compare with our contemporary point-of-view or with the point of view of other cultures?

The goals for Lesson Plan 4 are to identify and explain a song’s purpose and audience in order to a) gain clearer understanding of the writer’s context and meaning, and b) so that we can more clearly define and address our own purpose and audience in composing a song.

**Lesson 4 Song:** **“Yankee Doodle”**

Verse 1: Yankee Doodle came to town

A-Riding on a pony

Stuck a feather in his hat

And called it macaroni

Refrain: Yankee Doodle, keep it up

Yankee Doodle dandy

Mind the music and the step

And with the girls be handy

The origins of “Yankee Doodle” date to the French and Indian War, prior to the U.S. Revolutionary War. It was sung originally by British military officers as a satire, ridiculing the poor and ragged colonial soldiers with whom they served. It is most often credited to a British surgeon, Dr. Richard Shuckburgh in 1758. It was later adopted as a pro-American song (taking the lyrics more literally, without the tongue in cheek satire).

# Vocabulary

*“Yankee”* is a nickname for American colonists.

A *“Doodle”* is a fool.

*“Macaroni”* refers to something fashionable (there are several possible interpretations).

A *“Dandy”* is a man who dresses too fashionably and tries too hard to be “cool” (and is obviously not).

Translation:

**Colonist fool went to** town [ie, the big city]

**Riding on a pony** [not what an adult man rides gracefully]

**Stuck a feather in his hat**

**And called it a fashion statement** [what a country bumpkin!]

**Refrain:**

**Colonist fool, keep it** **up** [it amuses us]

**Colonist fool, you think you’re so cool**

**Mind the music and the step** [it’s too complicated for you]

**And with the girls be handy** [we’ll laugh as they reject your sorry self!]

Other verses:

(verses printed in 1775)

Brother Ephraim sold his Cow

And bought him a Commission

And then he went to Canada

To fight for the Nation

But when Ephraim he came home

He proved an arrant Coward

He wouldn’t fight the Frenchman there

For fear of being devour’d. (refrain)

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| Arts Integrated  Lesson Seed | | Art form | | **Subject Area** |
| Music:  Songs as Cultural Expression | | Social Studies  **Primary Sources** |
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| Lesson Title: Lesson Plan 4: Songs Are Primary Sources | | | | Grade: 7 |
| Name of teacher/Contributor and Name of School:  Sue Trainor, Teaching Artist | | | |  |
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| **State Curriculum Content Standards, Indicators, Objectives:** | | | | |
| Fine Arts Content Standard(s):  Standard 2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of music as an essential aspect of history and human experience. | Core Curriculum Content Standard(s):  **Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies**  **Cluster**: Key Ideas and Details | | | |
| Fine Arts Indicator(s):  **1.** Describe how musical expression reflects social, political, and ethical issues | **RH 6-8.6:** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s pint of view or purpose.  : | | | |
| Fine Arts Objective(s):  **f.** Compare ways in which creating and performing music bring satisfaction | **Essential Skills and Knowledge**   * Identify the author’s purpose and point of view. * Determine the difference between an author’s claim and any opposing claims. | | | |
| Objective(s) (Connecting the content areas):  Analyze the original meaning of the song “Yankee Doodle” in order to better understand the experience of American and British soldiers prior to the Revolutionary War. Create a parody in order to respond to “Yankee Doodle” from an American soldier’s point of view.  Essential Question: How can songs serve as primary source material in studying history and cultures? | | | | |
| Description of Lesson/Activities:  A. Sing the song “Yankee Doodle.” Discuss the vocabulary and connect meaning of the lyrics with students’ other knowledge of the American and British soldiers’ experience in the French and Indian War.  B. Explore the lyric as a primary source. Who is the narrator? Who is the audience? What might the writer’s purpose have been? How does the writer achieve his purpose?  C. Compose a parody of the first verse from the American point of view. If this parody had been written at the time, who would the narrator have been? Who would have been the audience? What might the purpose have been? How could we, as composers, achieve this purpose? (Remember to use the song’s natural beat and rhythm to emphasize important words.)  D. In small groups, compose a refrain lyric that communicates the main idea. (Remember to use the song’s natural beat and rhythm to emphasize important words.) | | | | |
| **Assessment Strategies:**  Small groups perform their refrains. Listeners critique based on criteria. **Criteria:** Did the composed refrain clearly communicate the main idea of the text? Was the main idea consistent with our understanding of a colonists’ point of view? Did the composers use beat and rhythm in the music to emphasize the most important words? | | | | |